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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 ANKARA 004860

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EUR/SE, EUR/PD, NEA/PD, DRL  
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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT,  
THURSDAY, AUGUST 26, 2004

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE  
THEMES:

HEADLINES  
BRIEFING  
EDITORIAL OPINION  
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#### HEADLINES

##### MASS APPEAL

`Mystery' Over Halki Seminary at NSC Meeting - Hurriyet  
Two Turkish Engineers Abducted in Iraq - Hurriyet  
Putin to Bring A Crowd of Businessmen - Hurriyet  
Russia is on Alert Following Plane Crashes - Sabah  
Iraq Discussed At NSC Meeting - Sabah  
Cease Fire Offer From PKK to Turkey - Sabah  
Russian Plane Crash - Terrorism or Negligence? - Milliyet  
Shiite Leader Sistani Urges Supporters to Gather in Najaf -  
Turkiye

##### OPINION MAKERS

Promises Forgotten: No US Military Operation Against PKK -  
Cumhuriyet  
Sadr and Sistani Call Shiites to Najaf - Radikal  
Ambassador Edelman visits Black Sea Region - Yeni Safak  
Turkey Discusses Safety of Truck Drivers in Iraq with US -  
Yeni Safak  
Shiites March to Najaf to Save Imam Ali Shrine - Zaman  
Fitch Upgrades Turkey's Outlook - Zaman

##### BRIEFING

Ambassador Edelman's Visit to the Black Sea Region: "Yeni  
Safak" reports that Ambassador Edelman, during his visit to  
the Black Sea Region, said that `considering the security  
issue Iraq, I don't think that there will be a US military  
operation against the PKK in the near future.' The  
Ambassador declined to rule out the possibility of a  
military operation at a later time. He also denied rumors  
circulating in the Turkish press that Osman Ocalan is under  
US control. Responding to a question about developments in  
Iraq, the Ambassador said that the US is `exerting every  
effort to establish peace and democracy in Najaf and in the  
rest of Iraq.' "Milliyet" reports on the Ambassador's  
comments on democratization in the Middle East, which he  
described as `important for the United States.' During his  
visit to the Governor of Ordu, the Ambassador noted that  
`democratization has been continuing around the world for  
the past 20-25 years, but the Middle East has been an  
exception.' Edelman stressed that Turkey had an important  
role to play in the region. `Turkey has reformed itself  
during the EU process,' he said, `and now provides a vivid  
example to countries in the region.' `This shows that if a  
country makes a decision and puts it's mind to it, it can  
achieve progress in raising standards, improving human  
rights, and carrying out economic reform,' he continued.  
The Ambassador noted that these issues were not even being  
debated in the Middle East five years ago. `Now,' he said,  
`there is a very lively debate about the future, about  
women's rights, and so on.' `But of course, progress  
depends on the leaders and people in the region,' he  
concluded.

NSC Meeting: "Hurriyet" reports that mystery surrounds the  
outcome of yesterday's regular meeting of Turkey's National  
Security Council. While, some sources say that the NSC  
discussed the possibility of re-opening of Halki Seminary,  
others say that the issue never came to the agenda. Some  
sources say the NSC did not reach a decision about the  
seminary, but reviewed various options and discussed recent  
statements by Patriarch Bartholomeos concerning restrictions  
on religious freedom in Turkey. The NSC reportedly  
discussed ongoing instability in Iraq and the need to bring  
an end to the isolation of the Turkish Cypriots. "Hurriyet"  
highlights the fact that yesterday's meeting was the last  
time the NSC will convene under the leadership of a military  
member as Secretary General. The new civilian Secretary  
General, Yigit Alpogan, will take part in the next NSC  
meeting in October.

PKK Clashes Continue: Papers report that a Turkish soldier  
was killed and a second was wounded in a clash with a group

of PKK militants near Semdinli in Hakkari province. Opposition CHP leader Deniz Baykal criticized the United States, saying that 'such attacks should remind those who don't keep their promises of their responsibility' for ongoing PKK activity. Meanwhile, "Sabah" reports that two high-level PKK militants were captured in a rural area of Tunceli province. The paper claims that 5,000 Turkish troops are engaged in anti-PKK operations in Tunceli. PKK/KONGRA-GEL Offers Bilateral Truce: "Sabah" reports that officials of the PKK/Kongra-Gel offered to resume the organization's cease-fire if Turkey ended military operations against the PKK. "Sabah" notes that Osman Ocalan's departure from the organization has triggered an exodus of nearly 500 PKK militants from Kandil Mountain in northern Iraq. The militants have reportedly settled in various towns, particularly Dohuk, near the Turkish border and have been issued identity cards by Iraqi authorities.

Two Turks Abducted in Iraq: "Hurriyet" and "Aksam" report that two Turkish engineers have been abducted in Iraq. The Iraqi militants who kidnapped the men demanded the withdrawal of all Turkish companies from Iraq within 72 hours. The two companies employing the men, Sa-Ra and Usluer, immediately announced that they will withdraw their employees from Iraq.

#### EDITORIAL OPINION: IRAQ

"The US is finished in Iraq"  
Fatih Altayli argued in the mass appeal "Hurriyet" (8/26): "The influence of Ayatollah Sistani in the Shiite community is very important. Al-Sadr's capacity to lead a popular resistance is also significant. The main difference between the two is in terms of approach: Sistani has advocated a temporary collaboration with the US, while al-Sadr has stood for violent struggle. Sistani has retained his influence within the Shiite community, but the development of al-Sadr's resistance and the US response has helped Al-Sadr to become more powerful than Sistani. The mistakes of the US have clearly created fertile ground for the more radical figure and weakened moderate leaders like Sistani. . Considering the current situation, Sistani is now changing his tone as well. He has called on Shiites to march on Najaf and to support al-Sadr's group. This is going to make things even tougher for the US. Finishing the job in Iraq will be very difficult, if not impossible, for the US now. Turkey should formulate its Iraq policy by taking into account the fact that the US is mired in a serious quagmire."

"A Crisis in the Arab World"  
Soli Ozel observed in the mass appeal "Sabah" (8/26): "The Arab world is in urgent need of new thinking about its ongoing crisis that was duly reported by editor Rami Khuri in Beirut's prestigious 'Daily Star.' . The Arab world has been suffering from a lack of development since the 1980s. The Arab states have produced instability, civil war, terrorism, and rebellion instead of development. None of the Arab states protect civil rights. The Arab world is also suffering from a serious identity crisis. The search for identity seems to be caught between many competing concepts of the state, tribalism, Islam, terrorism and pan-Arabism. The Arab world is also having problems shaping a clear stance toward regional players such as the US, Turkey, Israel, and Iran. The Arabs don't even have a clear view of whether to consider those actors as friends or enemies. It is the duty of Arab communities and Arab intellectuals to work to overcome these difficulties. It remains to be seen if the Arab world will have the social and political energy to do this."

EDELMAN